



Homeland
Security

Press Office
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Press Release

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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY ANNOUNCES HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING TASK FORCE

*Task Force Will Examine the State and Local Funding Process and Facilitate Funds
Getting to First Responders*

(Washington, DC) Mar. 15, 2004 - Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge today announced a Homeland Security Funding Task Force composed of state, county, city, and tribal representatives to examine the funding process and ensure that Department of Homeland Security funds move quickly to local first responders. The Task Force will identify state and local funding solutions that work effectively and can be extended to situations where there are impediments to the efficient and effective distribution of state and local homeland security funds.

The Task Force is composed of governors, mayors, county officials, tribal leaders and other senior officials with first-hand experience in homeland security issues and will operate under the aegis of the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) and its State and Local Officials and Emergency Response Senior Advisory Committees. Governor of Massachusetts Mitt Romney has been elected Chair of the Task Force, and Akron, Ohio Mayor Donald L. Plusquellic will serve as Vice Chair. Secretary Ridge expects to receive recommendations from the Task Force members and the HSAC within the next two months on how to expedite the money distribution process.

"The Department of Homeland Security shares the concerns of communities anticipating these funds," said Secretary Tom Ridge. "It is critical that the men and women on the front lines of the war against terror have the resources they need to do their jobs. By identifying best practices and determining ways to implement them across the country, the Task Force will put homeland security dollars into the hands of first responders more rapidly."

The enormous challenge of protecting Americans from terrorism requires a nationwide effort - a whole new philosophy of how we secure the country, a philosophy of shared responsibility, shared accountability and shared leadership. Therefore the Department has implemented a national strategy that allows funds to flow quickly from the Department to the states and requires states to partner with county, city, and tribal officials and work together to build a bottom-up system that serves the national strategy while sharing information, resources, and equipment. This plan highlights Secretary Ridge's commitment to "One Mission, One Team."

"This Task Force is an important step towards securing our nation," said Governor Mitt Romney. "I look forward to working with the Department in this crucial mission of better preparing American communities against the threat of terrorism." Mayor Donald Plusquellic said, "Enhancing first responder preparedness is a profoundly important responsibility. I am pleased to serve on the Task Force and play this role in helping to improve the security of all American citizens."

The Department of Homeland Security has already taken immediate action to speed the flow of grant funds to first responders, including:

- * Simplifying the application process by providing one electronic application for the State Homeland Security Grant Program, Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program grants and the Citizen Corps Grant Program.
- * Facilitating a series of conference calls between cities, counties and states to enhance communication, identify obstacles in the grants flow and search for best funding distribution practices. DHS is extending an offer to all 30 cities receiving Fiscal Year 2003 Urban Area Security Initiative funds to replicate this process.
- * Integrating the grant listings. DHS created www.dhs.gov/grants as a one-stop shop for information and applications for DHS all-hazards grants and homeland security grants from other federal departments.
- * Streamlining the grant application process by eliminating the preliminary review of budget information and implementing new reporting and monitoring mechanisms to make funding available immediately upon grant award. Previously, local jurisdictions faced two layers - state and federal - of budget worksheets before they could access funds.
- * Conditionally approving State or Urban Area Security Strategies, provided that all issues are addressed within a set time period. When the release of funds is contingent upon approval of a Security Strategy, conditional approval immediately puts money in the hands of first responders.
- * Implementing an aggressive timeline by which states must obligate funds to local jurisdictions within 60 days of receiving their grants package.
- * Offering alternative options for equipment procurement, through agreements with the Defense Logistics Agency and Marine Corps Systems Command to allow grantees to procure equipment directly from their purchasing schedules. These agreements provide an alternative to state and local

procurement processes and often result in more rapid product delivery at a lower cost.

These immediate actions already underway, in conjunction with the expert recommendations of the Homeland Security Task Force, achieve a core goal of the Department of Homeland Security - to deliver homeland security funds into the hands of first responders.

{ See Appendix A - Members of Homeland Security Funding Task Force. }

HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING TASK FORCE

Chair

Governor Mitt Romney - Massachusetts; Homeland Security Advisory Council (State and Local Officials Senior Advisory Committee Chair - SLSAC)

Vice Chair

Donald L. Plusquellic - Mayor of Akron, Ohio

States

Governor Dirk Kempthorne - Idaho

Governor Mark Warner - Virginia

Governor Ruth Ann Minner - Delaware

Michael Balboni - State Senator 7th District, New York

Richard Andrews - Former president of the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA); Homeland Security Advisory Council (Emergency Response Senior Advisory Committee Chairman - ERSAC)

Thomas J. O'Reilly - Administrator, Office of the Attorney General
Department of Law & Public Safety, Trenton, New Jersey

Municipal

James A. Garner - Mayor of Hempstead, New York

Beverly O'Neill - Mayor of Long Beach, California

J. Christian Bollwage - Mayor of Elizabeth, New Jersey

Nathan Smith - Mayor of Portland, Maine

Peggy Merriss - City Manager, Decatur, Georgia

Anthony Williams - Mayor of Washington, DC; Homeland Security Advisory Council (SLSAC Vice Chair)

Chuck Canterbury - Fraternal Order of Police Grand President; Homeland Security Advisory Council (ERSAC Vice Chair)

Counties

Doug Duncan - County Executive, Montgomery County, Maryland

Jane Halliburton - County Supervisor, Story County, Iowa

Ralph Ogden - Sheriff, Yuma County, Arizona

Mike Selves - Director, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Johnson County, Kansas

Tribal

Arlen P. Quetawki, Sr. - Governor, Zuni Tribe, Office of the Governor, Zuni, New Mexico

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